



Bluewater District School Board

351 1st Avenue North – PO Box 190
Chesley ON N0G 1L0
Telephone: (519) 363-2014 Fax: (519) 370-2909
www.bwdsb.on.ca

May 31, 2022

Coreena Smith, Senior Planner
County of Bruce
Planning & Development Department
11243 MacKenzie Road
Port Elgin, ON N0H 2C6
bcplpe@brucecounty.on.ca

RE: Draft Plan Conditions
Estates of Bluewater (41T-2016-02.46 & Z-2021-093)

Attention: Coreena Smith

Further to your email regarding the comments submitted by Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) for the Bluewater Estates subdivision in Saugeen Shores, BWDSB acknowledges that Council has concerns with the language used in the standard conditions, specifically Clause 23, which covers the following:

- i. Student accommodation for the new subdivision in terms of potential utilization of portables or amending school attendance areas;
- ii. Student transportation services in relation to the bus and walk zones for the new subdivision;
- iii. Advising that school bus pick-up locations have not been determined and will be located based on student safety; and,
- iv. The inclusion of sidewalks to ensure students can travel to and from school safely.

The Town of Saugeen Shores may choose not to include BWDSB's standard conditions for this development proposal and future proposals. The purpose of this letter is to provide context for Council regarding the inclusion of these conditions.

With respect to the first condition, BWDSB is required under the *Education Act* to accommodate students across Grey and Bruce counties. Accommodation is enabled through school buildings and any additions or alterations to a building, which may include portables. This standard condition has been provided as a courtesy to new residents to notify them that increased accommodation pressures in the Saugeen Shores attendance areas (which may not align with community boundaries), may require that students are assigned to schools outside of the municipal communities. Under the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), planning authorities are to ensure that comments, submissions, or advice that affect a planning matter are provided by a local board (including a school board). The requested conditions are worded to ensure prospective home purchasers understand the limitations facing BWDSB, and to provide an opportunity for them to reach out to the board to understand where their children may attend school. The intention of this condition is not to put the responsibility on the municipality, but to redirect accountability to the board. The following alternative wording could be employed to clarify this:

"Include in all Offers of Purchase and Sale a statement advising prospective home purchasers that accommodation within a public school operated by Bluewater District School Board may include temporary facilities, including but not limited to, portable classroom or directing students to an alternative attendance boundary."

Conditions two and three speak to walkability and busing needs, which are paramount to student safety.

The requested conditions ensure that future parents understand that busing services and walk zones are determined at the time of occupancy. These conditions educate parents on their due diligence to confirm how their children will travel to school with the Student Transportation Service Consortium of Grey Bruce. Parents often assume that there is busing provided when this may not be the case.

Lastly, regarding condition four, it was unclear on the revised draft plan for the subdivision if sidewalks were proposed. This condition is intended to ensure that sidewalks would be included to facilitate walkability to schools. If sidewalks are included within the subdivision, the board has no objection to this condition being removed.

Saugeen Shores, particularly Port Elgin, is facing accommodation pressures in its elementary and secondary schools. BWDSB is monitoring development pressures of roughly over 1,000 residential units in this area, which would translate to an increase in student enrolment. Forecasted growth projections highlight the need to establish long-term planning; part of which is ensuring the timely notification of future residents of the potential need to accommodate students outside of their attendance boundary, if needed.

BWDSB has limited tools at its disposal to address increased accommodation pressures in growing communities. If student growth within a current school attendance boundary exceeds the physical capacity of the school building and portables on site, attendance boundary reviews may be undertaken to address growth pressures between schools.

Once a 'family of schools' reaches a utilization rate of over 100%, the board would be in a position to submit a business case to the Ministry of Education for additions to current schools or new school builds. The Ministry of Education takes various factors into consideration when considering approval for capital funding for the above noted additions or new schools. As the communities in Bruce County continue to grow, it is important that the board and the municipality work together in securing school sites through draft plans of subdivisions, and by supporting the intensification needs on current school sites.

The BWDSB appreciates the concern from the municipality and have provided alternative wording to clarify the intent of the conditions, trusting that these amendments would support the original professional planning recommendations included within the revised draft plan of subdivision.

As growth continues within Bruce County, it is imperative that flexibility, support, and collaboration are incorporated into the growth strategies, not only for housing, but also student accommodation.

Sincerely,
Rob Cummings, CPA, CMA
Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer

c.c.: Dennis Dick, Manager of Plant Services
Shelley Crummer, Business Analyst